



**RESOLUTION
OF
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF COLUMBUS**

**In Support of Enhanced Private Attorney Involvement
with LSC-Funded Programs**

Whereas, the Legal Services Corporation and the programs it funds, including The Legal Aid Society of Columbus, have long recognized that the overarching values of private attorney involvement to LSC-funded programs are increased access, increased human and capital resources, and increased *pro bono* commitment; and

Whereas, at its April 2007 meeting, the Board of Directors of the Legal Services Corporation adopted Resolution 2007-003 supporting and encouraging private attorney involvement and urging governing boards of LSC-funded programs to collaborate with other organizations to effectively engage lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons; and

Whereas, the LSC Board of Directors resolution builds upon the following national LSC initiatives:

- The October 2005 LSC report, *Documenting the Justice Gap in America: The Current Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-Income Americans*, which found that 50 percent of the potential clients requesting assistance from an LSC grantee were turned away for lack of resources on the part of the program;
- The *LSC Strategic Directions 2006-2010*, which calls upon LSC to increase public awareness of and support for legal services to low-income persons in order to respond appropriately to more of their legal needs;
- The *LSC Performance Criteria*, which consider, in evaluating a program's legal representation and other activities intended to benefit the low-income population in its service area, whether that program effectively integrates private attorneys into its work in order to supplement the amount and effectiveness of its representation and other services;
- The Provision for the Delivery of Legal Services Committee of the LSC Board of Directors 2006 meetings, which highlighted the potential, opportunities and challenges of private attorney involvement and determined ways in which this critical resource can be used more effectively by LSC-funded programs as a means to help close the justice gap;
- The unanimous adoption in January 2007 by LSC Board of Directors of a strategic work plan entitled *Action Plan for Private Attorney Involvement: Help Close the Justice Gap, Unleash the Power of Pro Bono*, which highlights the benefits of

engaging private attorneys to help represent clients of LSC-funded programs and describes ways in which the LSC Board and staff will work to expand private attorney involvement.

- The American Bar Association's Model Rule 6.1 and similar state bar rules note the professional responsibility of every lawyer to provide *pro bono* legal assistance to persons of limited means;

Whereas, in Ohio:

- The 1991 Spangenberg Report, a comprehensive assessment of the unmet legal needs of low-income persons in Ohio, found that only 17% of low income Ohioans' legal needs were being met;
- Despite great improvements in state funding for civil legal services since that time, a huge unmet need still exists;
- The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, with help from a grant from the Ohio Supreme Court, has committed meaningful resources to enhancement of pro bono in Ohio;
- The Legal Aid Society of Columbus hired a full-time attorney pro bono coordinator in 2005 which greatly enhanced the pro bono program;
- In 2005, the Columbus Bar Association convened a pro bono task force to plan for increased pro bono efforts in Columbus; the Pro Bono Committee of the Columbus Bar Association continues to follow the recommendations of the task force and to bring together pro bono coordinators from the law firms;
- The report of the Ohio Supreme Court's Task Force on Pro Se and Indigent Litigants, issued in April, 2006, contains many excellent recommendations for enhancing delivery of civil legal services, including pro bono services;
- Robert F. Ware, President of the Ohio State Bar Association, has set a goal for 2007-2008 to establish a network of local committees made up of lawyers and judges in communities throughout Ohio that will encourage and facilitate pro bono service by local lawyers;
- The Legal Aid Society of Columbus pro bono staff participates in a statewide pro bono task force; in the Access to Justice Committee of the Ohio State Bar Association; and works with other pro bono staff from other regional offices to enhance both local and statewide pro bono opportunities;

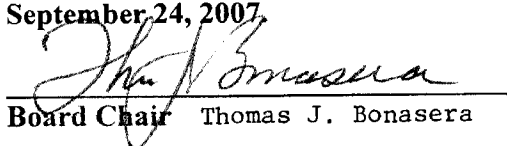
- The Legal Aid Society of Columbus is collaborating with Capital University Law School and The Ohio State University Moritz School of Law on a pro bono projects to involve more law students,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Directors of The Legal Aid Society of Columbus, in an effort to help close the justice gap in Ohio, supports and encourages private attorney involvement with The Legal Aid Society of Columbus and will endeavor to:

- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Central Ohio to develop and facilitate educational efforts that demonstrate the extent of the unmet civil legal need and encourage collective responsibility within Central Ohio by both public and private entities to help meet this unmet civil legal need;
- Collaborate with other organizations and entities in Central Ohio to develop effective strategies for engaging lawyers in *pro bono* representation and other services that benefit low-income persons;
- Consider including in that collaboration a broad range of organizations and entities, including the Columbus Bar Association, the Marion County Bar Association, the Union County Bar Association, the Madison County Bar Association, the Delaware County Bar Association, and the Morrow County Bar Association, Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation, the Ohio State Bar Association, local law firms and corporate law departments, The Ohio State University Moritz School of Law, Capital University Law School, local, state and federal government attorneys, and local, state and federal courts; and
- Develop strategies that encourage *pro bono*, including creative recruitment methods and delivery models, attorney practice and continuing legal education rules, and training, mentoring, support, and recognition of volunteers.

Be it Further Resolved that the Board of Directors of The Legal Aid Society of Columbus will promote, support and encourage private attorney involvement initiatives by publicizing and recognizing private attorney involvement in the work of The Legal Aid Society of Columbus and by collaborating with national, state and local organizations to create opportunities for such publicity and recognition.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of The Legal Aid Society of Columbus on September 24, 2007.


 Board Chair Thomas J. Bonasera